



Remember the coloring books you had as a kid? Some were black-and-white drawings where you filled in the hues with crayons, but others were more complicated. When you opened them, what you saw made no sense: Dots and numbers were scattered across a page, seemingly at random, creating what looked like a clutter of meaningless chaos.

But if you dragged your pencil from one number to the next in the correct order, a picture would emerge out of the lines you produced: a bear eating honey, a boy chasing a kite.

It seemed like a kind of magic, at the time: Something that wasn't there before, something you hadn't even imagined, was on the page, produced by your own hand. All you had to do was connect the dots.

Here at *Animal Sheltering* magazine, we're dot gatherers. But the dots we try to put on our pages are stories, stories about different groups doing good things for the animals in their communities. An animal control agency in Indiana that's figured out how to raise more funds, and thus save more animals. A shelter in California that makes customer service a top priority, and thus makes more matches. A humane society in South Carolina that creates a website where kittens multiply and crawl across the browser, illustrating the consequences of unrestrained breeding and the importance of spay/neuter.

That's just a tiny sample of some of our recent articles, each one a "dot" in the bigger puzzle we're all working on.

In this issue alone, we've got stories to help you help new parents keep their beloved pets without endangering their kids (the Behavior Department, p. 53), protect shelter dogs from canine influenza (Shelter Medicine, p. 49), give you ideas about cat housing design that will stimulate the animals and attract adopters (The "101" Department, p. 39), and figure out ways to give those high-energy adolescent dogs the treatment they need to become better adoption candidates ("The Soft Touch," p. 26).

Each of our stories is just one dot, one idea that's making a difference in one community—but some of them may also work for you. And if enough of us draw lines from one number to the next, connecting the dots, we'll create the picture we've been dreaming of for so many years: A world where no animals are killed due to lack of space. A world where homeless animals all have safe, comfortable, healthy places to stay while they await new homes. A world where euthanasia will be performed solely in cases of extreme sickness or injury—in cases where it's an act of mercy. A world where euthanasia itself is very, very rare—and homeless animals are, too.

Help us gather the dots: Tell us your stories about what's working in your community, and let us share it with others. Write to us at asm@humanesociety.org.

—Carrie, James, Jim, and Amy
Animal Sheltering magazine staff

Spreading the Word

I produce *Animals' Voice* magazine for SPCA Auckland in New Zealand.

Reading your Sept-Oct 2009 issue, I was taken by the great story about Pat Parelli, "The Long Way Home" [p. 25]. I was wondering if you would have any objection to *Animals' Voice* running the story in a future issue?

Many thanks.

—Bruce Scott
Managing Director
Regatta Group Publishers
Takapuna, Auckland, New Zealand

Editor's note: Yes, please go ahead! We always allow shelters, rescues, and other animal welfare groups to reprint our articles, as long as the purpose is educational and you credit us. It's one of the services we provide to the sheltering community, and we hope you'll use it whenever it would be helpful. So if your group has been highlighted in one of our stories, feel free to use it in your newsletter—and please send us a copy. If you have any questions or need technical assistance, contact us at asm@humanesociety.org.

